Arabic-Speaking EFL Learners' Recognition, and Use of English Phrasal Verbs in Listening and Writing

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Abstract

This study investigates the usefulness of acquiring English PVs (as a key component of English vocabulary) using listening activities. Therefore, this study analyzes how Arabic speakers studying English as a foreign language (EFL) understand and use English phrasal verbs through listening. A self-administered survey was distributed to 74 students, mainly from Saudi Arabia. They listened to a recording incorporating frequently used English phrasal verbs and identified those they could recognize. The survey also measured the ability of respondents to provide sentences in which they used phrasal verbs and gave their meanings in Arabic. The findings indicated that EFL students are likely more familiar with phrasal verbs in writing than in an oral context. For instance, the average respondent could detect six or seven out of ten phrasal verbs they heard, while about 90% of respondents could use the provided phrasal verbs correctly in writing. Respondents recognized some phrasal verbs more than others. At least 80% recognized "pick me up," "go on," and "go out," while less than 47% recognized "came out" and "set up." More than 81% knew the correct definition of phrasal verbs. These findings offer foundational data to help improve methodologies for Arabic speakers learning EFL through listening activities.

Keywords: EFL, listening, phrasal verb, Saudi Arabia, vocabulary

1. Introduction

Effective communication in a second language (L2) requires learners to understand what words mean in context (Wright & Cervetti, 2017), making vocabulary building essential (Nation & Webb, 2011; Susanto, 2017; Wang & Treffers-Daller, 2017). In reading, for example, a higher vocabulary leads to greater comprehension (Gardner et al., 2019), and someone must know at least 98% of the words in a passage to interpret its meaning (Schmitt et al., 2011). Furthermore, it is thought that a person needs to know at least 6,000 words to interpret written content in a language (Frevert et al., 2014). A comprehensive approach to learning a language thus targets native-like word knowledge, including word meanings, grammatical details, written forms, and how well the words link to one another (Nation & Webb, 2011).

For students of English as a foreign language (EFL) or second language (ESL), phrasal verbs (PVs) pose a particular obstacle to vocabulary retention and comprehension. For example, learners might use the wrong particle with a given verb, changing the meaning, as demonstrated with native Arabic speakers, whose first language (L1) lacks PVs (Alrajhi, 2020). Furthermore, although a person's language comprehension creates base knowledge, L2 learners may struggle with recognizing deeper word meaning and usage (Fung & Macaro, 2019). Consequently, researchers have suggested integrating PVs into formal learning (Cervantes & Gablasova, 2017; Torres-Mart ńez, 2018). Previous studies have focused on three primary reasons people avoid PVs: L1-L2 differences or similarities, L2 complexity, and managing EFL student challenges (Liao & Fukuya, 2004). The present study examined how Arabic-speaking EFL students might overcome obstacles to learning PVs. For this purpose, it sought to determine whether intermediate-to-advanced students could detect some of the most common English PVs from an audio recording.

1.1 Research Questions

This study sought to determine whether intermediate-to-advanced EFL students in Saudi Arabia could detect the most frequently used English PVs when hearing them. The following research questions guided the study:

RQ1: Can EFL students identify common English PVs in a recording?

RQ2: Can EFL students choose the correct definition for PVs?

RQ3: Can EFL students provide three PVs with their correct Arabic meanings?

RQ4: Can EFL students match PVs with their correct Arabic meanings?

Hypotheses were designed to answer each of the research questions:

H1: EFL students can identify common English PVs in a recording.

H2: EFL students can choose the correct definition for PVs.

H3: EFL students can provide three PVs with their correct Arabic meanings.

H4: EFL students can match PVs with their correct Arabic meanings.

1.2 Study Significance

Misunderstandings due to English PVs could be fatal. For example, in 1989, an airplane crashed after the Chinese pilot did not understand the PV "pull up" when the air traffic controller asked the pilot to pull up because he was flying in fog. As a result, the pilot crashed into a mountain (Thrush, 2001). This study sheds light on the advisability of learning English PVs (as a core component of English vocabulary) through listening exercises. It predicts PV comprehension through listening and understanding, giving the Arabic meanings with examples in complete sentences. To the researcher's knowledge, no prior studies had sought to predict PV comprehension through listening. Therefore, the present study could offer important data on how Arab EFL learners deal with and understand PVs transmitted through an audio format. The study also provides ideas and approaches to improve PV education.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Importance of Learning English in Saudi Arabia

EFL education in Saudi Arabia is shaped by the local culture, religion, community, teaching practices, and L1. Alrabai (2018) suggested that the Saudi community is the main factor in EFL learning because foreign influences (e.g., English) are considered a threat to religious traditions, tribal identities and associations, and domestic ties. Religious traditions have made Saudi culture resistant to progressive reforms and pose an obstacle to learning English (Alhawsawi, 2014). Although Arabic is the official language of Saudi Arabia, English has become the medium of instruction in many institutions, making it a necessity to learn.

Saudi Arabia has witnessed extraordinary changes in society, wealth, technology, and healthcare (Mohd, 2011). The government is seeking to keep the country growing by expanding EFL education because the language is widely understood as an international language (Nayar, 1997). The Saudi Ministry of Education has stated the following objectives of learning EFL (as cited in Ur Rahman & Alhaisoni, 2013):

1. To ensure learners acquire all the basic language skills of English (listening, speaking, reading, and writing).

2. To make sure learners are aware of the uses of English as a means of global communication.

3. To advance learners' responsiveness to English language learning.

4. To prepare learners to obtain the essential linguistic competence necessary in different occupations.

5. To help learners understand the economic, ethnic, and religious aspects of their society and prepare them to find solutions to societal problems.

6. To develop learners' linguistic competence to be able to advocate for Islam around the world.

7. To prepare learners with the linguistic competence to mingle with other cultures for mutual benefit.

8. To provide learners with the linguistic competence to participate in technological and scientific developments and thereby promote development in Saudi Arabia.

For these reasons, the Saudi government has spent billions of dollars on teacher recruitment, training, language laboratories, curriculum, and syllabus development (Ur Rahman & Alhaisoni, 2013).

2.2 ESL/EFL Vocabulary Acquisition

English proficiency often relies on the vocabulary knowledge of native and non-native speakers alike. Therefore, vocabulary development is vital to avoid confusion and misunderstandings, as discussed below.

Tozcu and Coady (2004) stated that vocabulary learning assists in language acquisition by developing reading proficiency and comprehension. Grauberg (1997) suggested four stages of learning vocabulary. The first stage, discrimination, is the ability to differentiate between sounds and letters, which helps learners practice listening, speaking, reading, and writing. When learners can distinguish sounds, they can pronounce words more accurately and comprehend written and spoken input better. The second stage is understanding the meanings of words and expressions. The third is the ability to memorize word meanings. The fourth involves learning new terms and integrating them into one's vocabulary.

Rohmatillah (2014) explored EFL/ESL vocabulary learning through interviews and questionnaires. The findings showed that learners faced several challenges with pronunciation and spelling (spoken and written expressions did not match in most cases), choice of suitable meanings (lack of vocabulary knowledge), variations of word form (lack of grammar knowledge), and an overall low level of everyday vocabulary. Significant factors were pronunciation difficulty related to phonology, inflections related to morphology, word families such as PVs and collocations related to the semantic system of English, and the categories of words related to syntax.

Altyari (2017) found that Saudi public high school students had weak English performance reflected in a lack of vocabulary knowledge and understanding. Khan (2011) identified areas of difficulty for Saudi EFL learners that included learning the meanings of vocabulary, memorizing spellings, using synonyms, and using affixes.

Alqahtani (2015) investigated the vocabulary learning difficulties of Arab EFL/ESL learners, noting that vocabulary should be learned with an emphasis on meaning. Saudi learners were generally taught more grammatical rules than vocabulary. Thus, teaching methodology plays a vital role in learning vocabulary.

2.3 Word Familiarity

Language learners must understand L2 vocabulary regardless of their primary or secondary language (Decarrico, 2001). Vocabulary education helps learners recognize how words combine to form complex phrases. This complex word usage in regular communication facilitates independent learning (Ur, 1996). Memorization on its own is insufficient for this learning, as receptive and productive knowledge is required (Kirmizi & Köme ç, 2019). Receptive knowledge refers to recognizing a word, while productive knowledge involves working with pronunciation and spelling, focusing mainly on how the word functions in different grammatical forms. Thus, L2 learners need to be familiar with a word in order to understand what it means and how to produce it. Without that familiarity, a speaker might not know, for example, how to pronounce a word from its spelling (Siyanova-Chanturia & Pellicer-Sánchez, 2018). Moreover, a word's meaning may dramatically change if the stress is placed on the wrong syllable. For instance, "convict" has very different meanings depending on stress; /ˈkan.vɪkt/ refers to someone convicted of a crime, while /kənˈvɪkt/ is a verb describing the action of convicting someone of a crime (González-Fernández & Schmitt, 2020).

2.4 Word Associations

A word's meaning is based on context, i.e., its associations with other words (Nattinger, 1988). For instance, some words, called collocations, are normally used together (Pellicer-Sánchez, 2017). Thus, language knowledge relies heavily on collocational knowledge and the learner's ability to manage syntax (Ellis, 2003). Unfortunately, L2 learners often do not know many collocations (Torres-Martínez, 2018). For example, "bitter milk" would sound odd to an L1 English speaker, while "sour milk" would sound natural (Demir, 2017). Thus, a person must understand a word based on how it occurs in context. For instance, the phrase "fast food" would be easier to understand (as it is a regular collocation) than "quick food." Similarly, the term "pore over" refers to reviewing something in detail, but an L2 speaker might get confused, as the homophone "pour" is associated with liquids.

2.5 English PV Features

English PVs are words combined to produce distinct meanings, but no generally agreed standard exists to classify them (Liao & Fukuya, 2004). They are sometimes classified as transitive, intransitive, separable, and inseparable. Celce-Murcia et al. (1983) identified three PV types. First, literal PVs engender words that keep their meanings in the same manner as they are typically used, such as "look for." Second, in an idiomatic PV, the individual words lose their meanings. "Make up," when used to refer to reconciliation, exemplifies an idiomatic PV. Third, the aspectual PV's meaning depends on the verb. A particle such as "up" focuses on the actions produced, as in "break up." Native speakers can also use verb-particle pairing, although L2 speakers may not fully understand how such a pairing works, and this pairing taxes learners' understanding (Darwin & Gray, 1999; Laufer & Eliasson, 1993; Liao & Fukuya, 2004). Additionally, their semantic complexity specific to the context creates a unique syntax (Alangari et al., 2020). Structurally unusual and complicated, PVs are uncommon in non-Germanic languages.

PVs and verb-particle combinations randomly appear in English, making it difficult to predict their usage (Nacey & Graedler, 2019). PVs also frequently include at least two orthographic words, challenging people to see them as a unit. A person who does not associate the words might interpret their meanings separately, deriving improper phrase meanings (Siyanova & Schmitt, 2007). As a result, learners need to view an English PV as a unit.

Students also confuse literal PVs with figurative ones or something in the middle (Alangari et al., 2020). A literal PV, such as "write down," should be easy, but a semi-transparent one like "eat up" might add complexity (Cervantes & Gablasova, 2017). Learners struggle to understand the figurative PV "tick off" if they identify the tick as an arthropod. Some PVs take on different meanings depending on the cultural context. For example, the PV "tick off" reflects annoyance in the United States or when someone is upset with someone in the United Kingdom (McCarthy & O'Dell, 2002). Many PVs may also be interpreted polysemously, holding multiple meanings (Garnier & Schmitt, 2016). For instance, "bring up" may refer to either rearing children or carrying items upward.

L2 English learners may be less certain about when a PV can be used than a one-word verb. A person can replace a verb with something else in a phrase if desired. A one-word verb may have a PV equivalent, such as "pass away," a PV for "die." However, the verb and the PV meanings are not the same, producing a polysemous PV.

The register used between PVs and one-word verbs may also confuse speakers (Celce-Murcia et al., 1983; Ishii, 2009; Mitchell, 2018). Therefore, a verb should be examined based on the register used when conversing.

2.6 English PVs as a Learning Obstacle

Given the ubiquity of PVs in English, they should be used to teach L2 learners how to speak English. However, learners might not fully understand some complex, non-literal PVs (Siyanova & Schmitt, 2007). While some PV meanings can be grasped through individual words, others challenge beginners. As noted above, idiomatic or figurative PVs could be especially difficult. For instance, Hagglund (2001) indicated that Swedish learners did not use PVs in speech as much as in writing.

Arabic is structurally different from English and lacks PVs. Compounding the challenge of learning these structures, most EFL Arabic students enter college with low English proficiency (Alghammas & Alhuwaydi, 2020). Their struggle to learn the language is complicated by PVs (Thyab, 2019; Wasserstein & Lipka, 2019).

Cheon (2006) found that Korean participants did best with translation activities, while Arabic learners worked better contextually. Morales (2000) reviewed Spanish speakers majoring in English and how they used English PVs to observe whether proficiency influenced learning. A student who does not fully understand PVs might avoid using them. Meanwhile, the link between these skills and their use was significant. Students employing this grammatical element did better in comprehension than others who did not. Learners were shown to understand new words and PVs based on other words in the sentence.

Yorio (1989) demonstrated that L1 and L2 speakers used PVs with almost the same frequency, although native speakers used them more often than L2 learners who had been in the country for at least a year. However, the study did not include a complete list of PVs used. McPartland-Fairman (1989) claimed semantic complexity posed a problem with which non-native speakers struggled. Sjoholm (1995) stated that Swedish and Finnish students of English did not use PVs as often as L1 speakers. In addition, intermediate Finnish speakers did not use as many PVs as Swedish speakers (Dagut & Laufer, 1985; Sjoholm, 1995). Swedish speakers had adapted better because, as a fellow Germanic language, Swedish had PV equivalents to English. In contrast, Finnish speakers avoided idiomatic PVs, likely due to Finnish coming from a different language family.

Waibel (2007) demonstrated that German speakers used PVs 2.6% more often than English native speakers, while Italian speakers used PVs less often (41.7%). German speakers were familiar with PVs because of the shared ancestry of English and German. Waibel (2007) also correlated learning English to studying and living in a country where English is the primary language. Liao and Fukuya (2004) demonstrated that Chinese learners did not use literal PVs due to semantic difficulty. Darwin and Gray (1999) showed that L2 English learners found using PVs difficult and struggled to apply the verb and particle meaning as a single term. Brinton (1988) considered "drink up" and other similar terms as PVs, although Quirk and Greenbaum (1973) remained uncertain about categorizing PVs. Finally, confusion still exists over how PVs function, and more of them are coined each year (Omer, 2019). Finally, PVs can confuse L2 speakers if they contain an unfamiliar word; for example, learners might struggle to determine what "chill out" means if they are unfamiliar with the word "chill."

3. Methodology

3.1 Participants

The participants were current and former EFL learners at the advanced and intermediate levels. Most were English majors in university English departments in Saudi Arabia, and a few were English teachers. The researcher excluded any individuals not currently or previously majoring in English in order to test English PV knowledge among advanced and intermediate learners.

Completed primarily by students in Saudi Arabia (95.9%), 74 surveys with valid responses were analyzed. The characteristics of the respondents are summarized in Table 1. Two surveys were completed in Jordan and one in the United States. The majority of respondents were Saudis (90.1%). The sample comprised mainly men (90.1%). Most (85.3%) held bachelor's degrees, while 10.3% had a masters. Only three had a doctorate. Their ages ranged from 18 to 57 ($M = 26.55$, $SD = 9.033$).

Table 1. Sample Characteristics

Characteristics	Count	Percent
Country ($N = 74$)		
Jordan	2	2.7%
Saudi Arabia	71	95.9%
United States	1	1.4%
Gender ($N = 71$)		
Female	7	9.9%
Male	64	90.1%
Nationality ($N = 71$)		
Egyptian	1	1.4%
Jordanian	2	2.8%
Saudi	64	90.1%
Somali	1	1.4%
Sudanese	2	2.8%
Syrian	1	1.4%
Highest Level of Education Completed ($N = 68$)		
Bachelor's degree	58	85.3%
Master's degree	7	10.3%
Doctorate	3	4.4%
Age ($N = 71$): $M = 26.55$, $SD = 9.033$, Range = 18, 57		

3.2 Research Design and Instrumentation

This study employed an experimental design, given that no known researchers had predicted PV comprehension through a listening exercise. The findings offer rich information about how Arab EFL learners deal with and understand spoken PVs. To collect data, the researcher employed a five-section, self-administered questionnaire. The first section contained demographic questions (gender, nationality, highest level of education completed, and age). The second measured their knowledge of what English PVs were. In the third section, respondents listened to a passage and then identified the PVs they heard. The passage included the most frequently used English PVs according to Liu (2011):

> I have been in my office since eight in the morning. I am tired of working on this project. I cannot go on. I need to go home. I asked my brother to pick me up. I need to have a good sleep so I can come back tomorrow with a fresh mind. Resting well will make me come up with great ideas for the project. I did find out that working long hours would slow our thinking. So, I decided to go out every three hours to refresh my mind. I always point out this method to my colleagues. It came out around my workplace. I grew up in the countryside, so I always set up my work desk outside. I enjoy working in the fresh air.

In the fourth section, respondents were given the three phrasal verbs "go on," "pick up," and "come back" and were asked to use each in an English sentence and provide its Arabic meaning. The final section consisted of 10 multiple-choice questions, in which respondents had to choose the correct Arabic definition of a PV from three options.

3.3 Data Collection

The survey was created and deployed on the online survey platform QuestionPro. The survey was sent to participants through their university emails after obtaining institutional permission. Recipients were informed they could choose not to participate in the survey at any time during data collection. The data were exported from the survey website into an Excel spreadsheet and transferred into SPSS (Version 26).

3.4 Data Analysis

SPSS was used to perform the statistical tests after data were cleaned and coded in Excel. Responses were coded as 1 for a correct or 0 for an incorrect choice. Frequencies and percentages provided descriptive summaries of respondents' characteristics and their responses. A one-sample chi-square test ($p \geq .05$) was performed to test the research hypotheses.

4. Findings

The findings are presented in relation to each research question and corresponding hypothesis.

4.1 Research Question 1

In relation to Research Question 1 (Can EFL students identify common English PVs in a recording?), Hypothesis 1 stated that EFL students can identify common English PVs in a recording.

Respondents listened to a recording and attempted to list all 10 PVs it contained. In this part of the questionnaire, 39 respondents provided valid answers (i.e., provided at least two PVs). On average, respondents identified 6.49 correct PVs (*SD* = 1.998). Figure 1 shows the number of correctly identified PVs plotted on the x-axis, with the number and percentage of respondents who provided each number of correctly identified PVs.
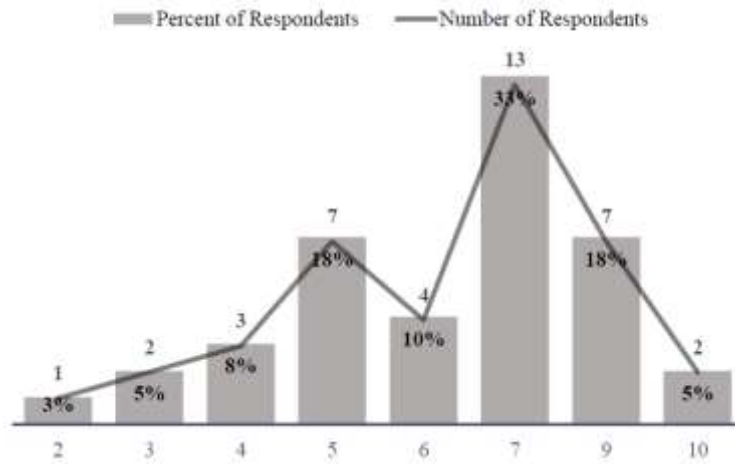

Figure 1. Number of correctly identified PVs by respondent

The 39 respondents correctly identified some PVs but not others. The results are summarized in Table 2. The top three correctly heard and written PVs were "pick me up" (85%), "go on" (80%), and "go out" (80%). On the other hand, only 41% of respondents understood the PV "set up," while 46% recognized "came out" (see Figure 2).

Table 2. PVs identified and written correctly

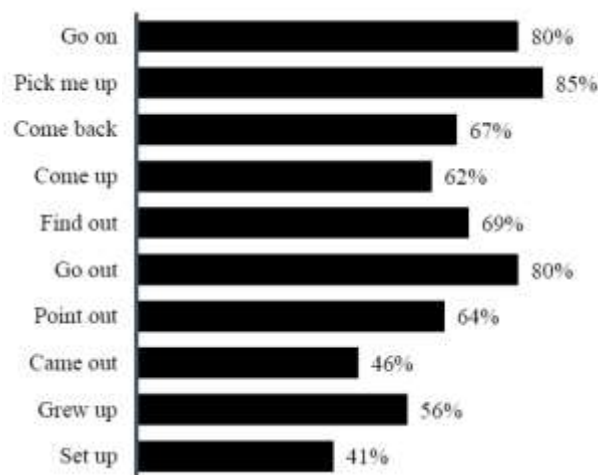| PV	*N*
Go on	31
Pick me up	33
Come back	26
Come up with	24
Find out	27
Go out	31
Point out	25
Came out	18
Grew up	22
Set up	16

Figure 2. PVs identified and written correctly

A one-sample chi-square test showed the average rate of respondents correctly identifying PVs was 64.9%. The test was performed for each PV individually (see Table 3). The PV "pick me up" was correctly identified significantly more than the average (84.6%), $\chi^2(1) = 6.655$ ($p = 0.01$). On the other hand, respondents correctly identified the PVs "came out" (46.2%) and "set up" (41%) significantly below the average ($p < 0.05$). Respondents correctly detected all other given PVs at a percentage not significantly different from the average.

Table 3. One-sample chi-square test results

PV		Test Statistic	Sig.	Observed Correct PVs	Decision
1	Go on	3.643	.056	79.5%	No sig. diff.
2	Pick me up	6.655	.010*	84.6%	Above average
3	Come back	.053	.817	66.7%	No sig. diff.
4	Come up with	.193	.660	61.5%	No sig. diff.
5	Find out	.321	.571	69.2%	No sig. diff.
6	Go out	3.643	.056	79.5%	No sig. diff.
7	Point out	.011	.917	64.1%	No sig. diff.
8	Came out	6.016	.014*	46.2%	Below average
9	Grew up	1.234	.267	56.4%	No sig. diff.
10	Set up	9.758	.002*	41.0%	Below average

Note. *Asymptotic significance is displayed with significance set at .05.

4.2 Research Question 2

In relation to Research Question 2 (Can EFL students choose the correct definition for PVs?), Hypothesis 2 stated that EFL students can choose the correct definition for PVs.

Respondents were asked to choose the correct English PV definition from three options (see Table 4). Most respondents (81.7%) correctly answered this question. Moreover, a one-sample chi-square test was conducted to determine whether the distribution of answers followed hypothesized distributions of 80% for Definition 1, 10% for Definition 2, and 10% for Definition 3. The test revealed no significant difference between responses and the hypothesized distribution, $\chi^2(2) = 0.761$, $p = 0.684$, as represented in Figure , indicating that most respondents chose the correct English PV definition.

Table 4. Correct definition of English PVs ($N = 71$)

Definition Options	N	%
1. A phrase that combines a verb with a preposition or adverb or both and functions as a verb whose meaning is different from the combined meanings of the individual words.	58	81.7%
2. A word belonging to one of the primary form classes in any language that typically serves as a modifier of a noun to denote a quality of the thing named, indicate its quantity or extent, or specify a thing as distinct from something else.	5	7.0%
3. A word belonging to one of the primary form classes in any language that typically serves as a modifier of a verb, an adjective, an adverb, a preposition, a phrase, a clause, or a sentence.	8	11.3%

Note. Chi-square = 0.761, *df* = 2, Asymptotic Sig. (2-sided test) = 0.684.
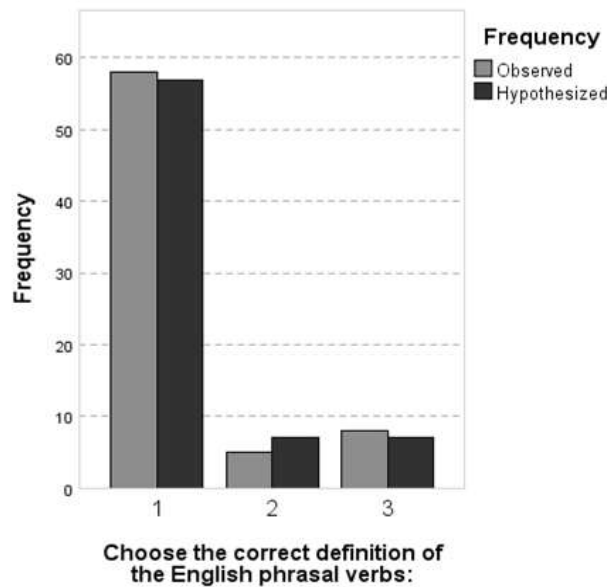
Figure 3. Correct definition of English PVs (observed vs. hypothesized)

4.3 Research Question 3

In relation to Research Question 3 (Can EFL students provide three PVs with their correct Arabic meanings?), Hypothesis 3 stated that EFL students can provide three PVs with their correct Arabic meanings.

Respondents were given three PVs to use in English sentences and provide their Arabic meanings. The number and percentage of correct and incorrect uses of the given PVs by respondents are presented in Table 5, where 70 respondents provided valid answers. That is, 92.9% of the 70 respondents used the PV "go on," 97.1% used "pick up," and 98.6% used "come back" correctly.

A chi-square test was conducted to assess whether the rate at which respondents used PVs correctly in English sentences and provided their Arabic meanings was significant. A hypothesized distribution was 95% correct and 5% incorrect uses. Table 5 shows that respondents could use the given PVs in English sentences, as the distribution of responses did not significantly differ from the hypothesized one ($p = 0.05$).

Table 5. English Sentences with Arabic Meanings

PV	Incorrect	Correct	Arabic Meaning	χ^2(Sig.)
Go on	5 (7.1%)	65 (92.9%)	يستمر، يكمل، يمضي، يتبع، يواصل، يجري (يحصل)، يذهب	.677(.411)
Pick up	2 (2.9%)	68 (97.1%)	يقل (شخص)، يأخذ، يلتقط، يستلم، يكتسب، يرد (على الهاتف)، يمسك، يحضر	.677(.411)
Come back	1 (1.4%)	69 (98.6%)	يعود، يأتي، يرجع	1.880(.170)

4.4 Research Question 4

In relation to Research Question 4 (Can EFL students match PVs with their correct Arabic meanings?), Hypothesis 4 stated that EFL students can match PVs with their correct Arabic meanings.

Respondents were presented with 10 PVs and three possible meanings for each and were asked to choose the correct meaning; 71 respondents gave valid responses. The number and rate for each PV are presented in Table 6 and Figure 3. On average, 86.2% of respondents chose the correct meaning. A one-sample chi-square test determined whether all PVs were correctly chosen on average. The results (see Table 7) indicated that respondents recognized the correct Arabic meaning of the PVs "pick up," "come back," "grow up," "point out," and "find out" at an above-average level; "go on" and "come up with" at an average level; and "come out," "set up," and "go out" at a below-average level.

Table 6. Arabic meanings chosen for PVs (*N* = 71)

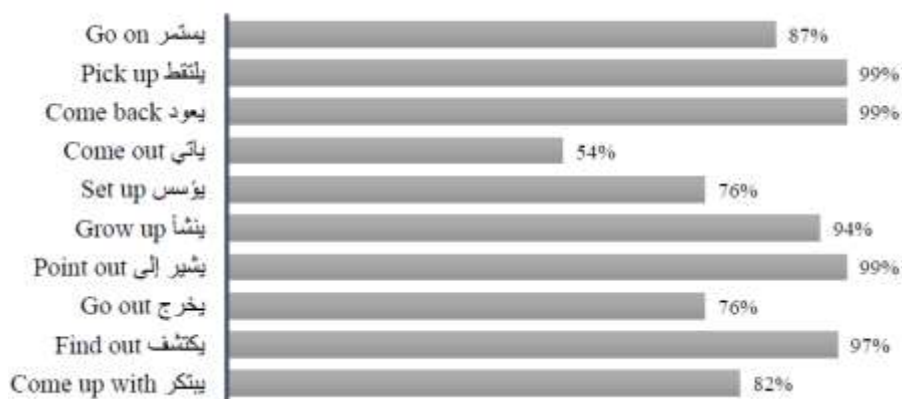| PV	Arabic Meaning					
	First		Second		Third	
	Word	*N* (%)	Word	*N* (%)	Word	*N* (%)
Go on	يغادر	3 (4.2%)	يذهب	9 (12.7%)	يستمر	62 (87.3%)
Pick up	يعطي	1 (1.4%)	يلْتقط	70 (98.6%)	يضع	0 (0.0%)
Come back	يعود	70 (98.6%)	يقترب	0 (0.0%)	يبتعد	1 (1.4%)
Come out	يكون	18 (25.4%)	يذهب	18 (25.4%)	يأتي	38 (53.5%)
Set up	يؤسس	54 (76.1%)	يجلس	11 (15.5%)	ينهض	7 (9.9%)
Grow up	يخرج	0 (0.0%)	ينشأ	67 (94.4%)	يستقيم	4 (5.6%)
Point out	يتوقف	1 (1.4%)	نقطة	0 (0.0%)	يشير إلى	70 (98.6%)
Go out	يخرج	54 (76.1%)	يغادر	25 (35.2%)	يمشي	2 (2.8%)
Find out	يظهر	0 (0.0%)	يخترع	5 (7.0%)	يكتشف	69 (97.2%)
Come up with	ينزل	0 (0.0%)	يبتكر	58 (81.7%)	يصعد	13 (18.3%)

Figure 3. Correct Arabic meanings chosen for PVs

Table 7. One-sample chi-square test results

PV	Test Statistic	Sig.	Correct PVs Observed	Decision
1 Go on (يستمر)	.071	.784	87.3%	No sig. diff.
2 Pick up (يلْتقط)	9.165	.002*	98.6%	Above average
3 Come back (يعود)	9.165	.002*	98.6%	Above average
4 Come out (يأتي)	63.739	< .001*	53.5%	Below average
5 Set up (يؤسس)	6.141	.013*	76.1%	Below average
6 Grow up (ينشأ)	3.980	.046*	94.4%	Above average
7 Point out (يشير إلى)	9.165	.002*	98.6%	Above average
8 Go out (يخرج)	6.141	.013*	76.1%	Below average
9 Find out (يكتشف)	7.200	.007*	97.2%	Above average
10 Come up with (يبتكر)	1.214	.271	81.7%	No sig. diff.

Note. *Asymptotic significance is displayed with significance set at .05.

5. Discussion

Saudi Arabia has seen remarkable changes in its society, wealth, technology, and healthcare (Mohd, 2011). EFL / ESL In terms of vocabulary retention or use in context, Saudi learners face a number of challenges, including pronunciation, spelling, synonym or difficulty in meaning comprehension or choice of meaning (Rohmatillah, 2014; Altyari, 2017; Khan, 2011). Vocabulary education teaches students how words combine to form complex phrases. Memorization is insufficient for this learning because it requires both receptive (recognition) and productive (usage) knowledge (Kirmizi & Köme ç, 2019). Thus, in order to understand what a word means and how to produce it, L2 learners must be familiar with it.

PVs and verb-particle combinations appear at random in English, making prediction difficult (Nacey & Graedler, 2019). PVs frequently include at least two orthographic words, making it difficult for people to see them as a whole. Someone who does not associate the words may interpret their meanings separately, resulting in incorrect phrase meanings (Siyanova & Schmitt, 2007; Alangari et al., 2020). As a result, students must consider an English PV as a whole.

Vocabulary acquisition or learning is important in effective communication as vocabulary helps in comprehending and interpreting what is being said or written. In EFL context phrasal verbs (PVs) create difficulty in comprehension and retention of vocabulary used in communication. This leads to the misinterpretation or manipulation of the message or presented idea in communication. Thus, understanding and interpretation of PVs in EFL context is of worth importance for successful communication using English language.

Arabic differs structurally from English and lacks PVs. PVs can be confusing to L2 speakers if they contain an unfamiliar word; for example, if they are unfamiliar with the word "chill," learners may struggle to understand what "chill out" means.

Much of the available literature worked on the challenges faced by ESL/ EFL learners' development of vocabulary as general and phrasal verbs in particular. After reviewing the available literature, it has been noted that no extensive study is conducted in order to take reviews from actual learners' recognition, retention or usage of phrasal verbs in EFL context. This study investigates the usefulness of acquiring English Phrasal Verbs (component of English vocabulary development) using listening activities in context of Saudi Arabia. Thus, this study is unique in its own way.

The present study investigated Saudi EFL learners' identification and usage of English PVs in context of writing and listening. According to the findings, EFL students are more likely to be familiar with phrasal verbs in writing than in an oral context. It implies that Saudi EFL learners could easily make sentences of given phrasal verbs in writing task than recognition in listening. They have sufficient understanding of PVs in making written effective communication without disrupting or changing the meaning of original sense of PV. For example, the average respondent could identify six or seven out of ten phrasal verbs heard, while approximately 90% of respondents could correctly use the provided phrasal verbs in writing. The found data shows that there is set of phrasal verbs which is more likely understood by Saudi EFL learners as compare to other phrasal verbs. Implying that, there is possibility of much or less exposure of PVs to learners. The phrasal verbs which they encounter or happen to learn or use much have more chance of clear understanding and usage as compare to those which are less encountered by them. Under the present study investigation, it has been observed that some phrasal verbs were recognized more than others by respondents. At least 80% of people recognized "pick me up," "go on," and "go out," but only 47% recognized "came out" and "set up." More than 81% of people correctly defined phrasal verbs. These findings provide crucial information for improving methodologies for Arabic speakers learning English through listening activities.

Phrasal verbs development process can be accelerated through listening activities. The area of listening skill can be subject to more challenging and useful in developing vocabulary skill in general among ESL/EFL learner, as it is natural order of language learning or acquisition. In natural order, listening is forerunner in developing speaking.

This study investigates the feasibility of learning English PVs through listening exercises. It predicts PV comprehension by listening and understanding and providing Arabic meanings with examples in full sentences. As a result, the current study could provide valuable information about how Arab EFL learners deal with and comprehend PVs delivered in an audio format. The study also offers suggestions and approaches for improving PV education.

According to the findings of this study, Arabic-speaking EFL learners were more likely to recognize, understand, and correctly use English PVs in writing than in listening. These findings provide crucial information for improving methodologies for Arabic speakers learning English through listening activities. Two areas have been focused; writing and listening for PVs recognition and usage. Researchers, policymakers, curriculum designers, and educators in Arab countries could use the findings to improve learning methodologies.

The present study shed light on understanding of PVs development challenges and pose solutions. Moreover, findings become the solid ground in developing, shaping or designing teaching methodology in any of EFL context, specifically Arab EFL context.

This study investigated how well Arabic-speaking EFL students could identify, understand, and use common English PVs in complete sentences. Such metrics are needed because of the importance of incorporating PVs into EFL/ESL education (Cervantes & Gablasova, 2017; Torres-Mart ńez, 2018). Despite this importance, Arabic-speaking EFL students have difficulty with PVs because PVs do not exist in their L1. No previous studies had focused on this area

and population, and there is a need for further research on how Arabic speakers understand and use English PVs to improve education. Major findings of this study are presented for each research question, followed by limitations and recommendations.

5.1 Research Question 1

In relation to Research Question 1 (Can EFL students identify common English PVs in a recording?), a large proportion of respondents could detect most PVs they heard from the passage. Sixty-six percent could detect at least six PVs out of 10, while 34% could detect less than six percent. Also, respondents could detect the PV "pick me up" at an above-average rate. To the researcher's knowledge, no other study has employed listening to measure EFL learners' ability to detect the PVs they encounter. These findings thus offer a starting point for further studies on this topic.

5.2 Research Question 2

Research Question 2 asked, "Can EFL students choose the correct definition for PVs?" A significant majority of respondents were familiar with the correct definition of the English PVs. However, more than 18% were unfamiliar with the correct definition, likely because Arabic lacks the PV construction.

5.3 Research Question 3

Research Question 3 asked, "Can EFL students provide three PVs with their correct Arabic meanings?" Most respondents could use the PVs correctly in sentences and provided the correct Arabic meanings associated with each PV. Respondents showed a greater ability to understand and use English PVs in writing than through listening. This finding corroborated Hagglund (2001), who found underuse and overuse patterns of PVs among Swedish learners who did not use PVs in speech as much as in writing.

5.4 Research Question 4

In terms of Research Question 4 (Can EFL students match PVs with their correct Arabic meanings?), on average, 86.2% of respondents could match the correct Arabic meaning of PVs. On the individual level, over 86.2% could recognize "pick up" (98.6%), "come back" (98.6%), "grow up" (94.4%), "point out" (98.6%), and "find out" (97.2%). On average, 87.3% could recognize "go on," and 81.7% could match "come up with." Fewer could match "come out" (53.5%), "set up" (76.1%), and "go out" (76.1%).

This demonstrated that respondents were more familiar with some PVs than others, suggesting they did not comprehend the overall concept of PVs. Language knowledge relies heavily on collocational knowledge and the learner's ability to manage syntax (Ellis, 2003), as a word's meaning is based on its associations (Nattinger, 1988). In addition, Siyanova and Schmitt (2007) contend that people who do not associate words might interpret the meanings of those words separately, deriving improper meanings. Hence, it is important to learn each English PV as a unit.

5.5 Limitations and Recommendations for Future Research

This study had several limitations, which could be used as a basis for further research. The sample size was small due to limited time and financial resources. That is, data were collected in two months via a free online survey tool, thus limiting the number of completed surveys. In addition, the survey did not establish whether learners had lived in an English-speaking country, how long they had been studying English, or their professions (e.g., if they were English teachers), factors that could significantly affect their understanding and use of English PVs. Therefore, it would be beneficial for a similar study to increase the number of participants to obtain a more representative sample. Future research could also collect more demographic information to compare groups with varying English skills and backgrounds.

As the surveys were sent to potential participants online, many recipients ignored the emails or started to answer the survey but did not complete it. Since some participants did not answer the survey, the reliability of the results might have been negatively affected. This limitation further shows the need for a larger sample size.

Since the study examined 10 English PVs, numerous other frequently used PVs were left out of the instrument. A longer list of PVs could offer more in-depth data on learner knowledge and abilities as well as a more comprehensive comparison of their recognition and use of different PVs. Testing Arabic-speaking EFL learners' skills in identifying and using PVs before and after a course could be used to benchmark individual progress over time. Finally, similar studies could apply the present study's methodology to help improve listening skills among Arabic-speaking EFL learners.

6. Conclusion

This study revealed that Arabic-speaking EFL learners were more likely to recognize, understand, and correctly use

English PVs in writing than listening. The findings could be used by researchers, policymakers, curriculum designers, and educators in Arab countries to improve learning methodologies. More specifically, the data show that listening could be given greater emphasis to enhance learners' understanding and use of English PVs.

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